Hews Bits



First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown, New Jersey

Pastor's Message



Believe what you want about global warmer, the summer of 2024 has been hot. As I exited the church building either Sunday, June 30, Sunday, July 7 or both Sundays, I returned to my car (neither looking for nor wanting another project yet pondering to myself about the benefits if some or all of the church were air conditioned. Who would complain if First Presbyterian Church were cool inside when it was hot, stuffy and steamy outside?

Over the years, the projects we have completed made our church facility more functional, relational, and even missional. In 2007, when the fellowship hall was gutted and renovated, the final product improved the aesthetics, made the facility considerably safer, more functional, and relational. The restoration was essential.

In 2011, Tropical Storms Irene and Lee, respectively, flooded the first floor of the Outreach Center. Again, the space was gutted and renovated. The outcome was it advanced and enhanced our church's mission with the food pantry without which we would not be doing what we presently are. The restoration was essential and worth it.

In 2015, the stained-glass windows were repacked and restored. The building became more energy efficient, and it was noticeable. The restoration was worth it. A good call.

In 2017, the slate roof was replaced. The job cost \$200,000. Costly? Absolutely. Yet, it improved the building's appearance as well as its energy efficiency. Another good call.



In 2022, a new addition with an elevator was completed. This project exceeded five hundred thousand, and we're still paying it off. But it made access to the Sanctuary easier than climbing the stairs and less anxiety-generating than using the old elevator.

In the Old Testament, there is a story about Nehemiah. Nehemiah rallied his people. In return, the people renewed their devotion to God and commitment to each other. They gathered as a nation to hear the Torah read. They offered a national prayer of confession. They assumed responsibility not only for the restoration of Jerusalem and temple but also for the maintenance and care of the dilapidated Temple. After a lengthy worship service, they declared: We will not neglect the house of our God (Nehemiah 10:39).

I think the installation of an air conditioner and an automated external defibrillator (AED) device allows us to provide better care for our members and all who enter our church facility. One wellrespected pastor told me after his own congregation hemmed and hawed about air conditioning the church he served, "Would you be-lieve?" he said. "Once the church was air conditioned, not one person complained." It is amazing the positive affect when we do not nealect the house of God (Nehemiah 10:39).

Better days, cooler days lie ahead. Until then, stay faithful.

See you in worship.

Pastor David

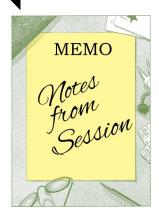






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SESSION

Clerk of Session: Deb Albrecht President: Chester Topolski Vice-President: Lisa Besser Treasurer: Erika Wulster Assistant Treasurer: Zach Burke Secretary: Deb Albrecht Financial Secretary: Don Nicholls

CLASS OF 2025

Zach Burke Pete Peterson Chester Topolski

CLASS OF 2026

Mark Nelke Elizabeth Topolski Gail Weber

CLASS OF 2027

Lisa Besser Jennifer McElroy Donald Nicholls

BOARD OF DEACONS

Moderator: Judy Trigg Vice Moderator: Betsy Gervasi Secretary: Teri Harvey Treasurer: Joan Cameron

CLASS OF 2025

Emily Arena Derek Cameron Joan Cameron David Conrad

CLASS OF 2026

Kelly McElroy Judy Trigg Maggie Wilson Open

CLASS OF 2027

Betsy Gervasi Teri Harvey Erika Wulster Open



Session News

Excerpts from the Session meeting held on Thursday, Apr. 18, 2024. Session approved the following:

- The landscape sketch of the Blairstown area presented by Gina Trish of Blair Academy and Liz Dwyer of Blairstown to be painted on the exterior of the side wall of the Outreach Center by art students of Blair and North Warren High School under the supervision of Gina and Liz.
- Vacation time for Jen Plut the week of Aug. 4, 2024.
- A railing up to the pulpit to be installed on the choir side of the Sanctuary.
- News Bits to be bi-monthly. On Sunday, Apr. 21, 2024 a Special Session meeting was held for the purpose of receiving Amanda Macchia into membership in our church by letter of transfer from the First Presbyterian Church of Newton, NJ.

In order to take prompt action on the discovery of asbestos in the furnace room of the church, Session approved the following by electronic vote on Apr. 27, 2024:

On Apr. 27, 2024 a request from Pastor Harvey

for Session action regarding the proposal received from Checkmark Industrial LLC of Sparta NJ for the removal of asbestos from one pipe in the furnace room and the encapsulation of the asbestos on a second pipe, and HEPA vacuuming of the area to remove asbestos particles at a cost of \$2,925, and safety testing following the completion of the work by Envirovision Consultants at a cost of \$600-\$650.

Excerpts from the Session meeting held on Thursday, May 16, 2024. Session approved the following:

- An adult Baptism request from Elizabeth "Lizzie" John.
- The requested contribution from the Children's Center for use of the church space to be \$690 per month for the 2024–25 school year. (a 5% increase from 2023 –24)
- The insurance renewal for the church received from Brown & Brown Ins. and underwritten by Guide One with an annual premium of \$13,448.09 (an increase of approximately \$1,800).

Excerpts from the Session meeting held on Thursday, June 13, 2024.

- A request from Marlene Wilburn, director of the Children's Center, to use Fellowship Hall and the playground for a Children's Center summer program the week of Jul. 15— 19, 2024.
- A request from Pastor Harvey to take study leave Jun. 19–29, 2024 to attend a Humanities study of World Religions at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire.
- A recommendation from the Enduring Gifts Ministry to liquidate \$15,000 out of the church's endowment to replace the air conditioning at the Outreach Center.
- Communion to be held on Aug. 11, 2024 rather than Aug. 4 when Pastor Harvey will be out of town.
- A request from the McElroy family to allow them to bring a Seeing Eye Guide Dog puppy in training, "Teal," to

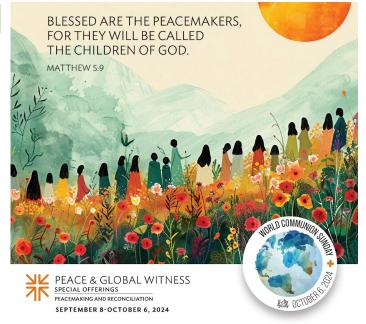
"Teal," to church services and functions.



Mission Ministry

The Peace & Global Witness Offering is received during the Season of Peace, which ends on World Communion Sunday, Oct. 6.

Peace Offerings may be given electronically from the donate/give now button on our website (fpcb-nj.org) — enter at the PC(USA) Special Offerings box, or by mailing a check made payable to 'First Presbyterian Church' — please be sure to mark 'Peace offering' in the memo. You also may give by credit card online at http://pcusa.org/peace-global.



Deacon Ministry

The Deacons are hoping for your summer, the warm weather we all waited for in the winter, and now we are praying for the cooler temperatures. Fall is right around the corner, so praise for the glorious days. The food pantry has been busy like always, and we appreciate your generous donations. If you go shopping and would like to get something we could always use paper products and personal items. These items go rather quickly. If you would like to do a coffee hour there is a sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall. It is easy in the summer, because you can make cold drinks, for those that are wanting to,

you can still make coffee. You can always bring a finger snack (cookies, muffins, watermelon) to share on a Sunday morning.

The list below is the sign-up sheet for Deacons for the rolls that you signed up for each upcoming month. The Deacon doesn't need to do every Sunday the month they are signed up for. They just need to make sure someone is doing it. We appreciate all of the helpers. Many hands make light work.

Additionally, our church will be providing a hearty lunch for about 12 to 15 volunteers at the Habitat for Humanity work site on Sat., Sep. 14. The deacons are asking for donations of fruit, iced tea, water, sandwiches, chips, and baked goods to be dropped off at the Outreach Center no later than 10 AM on Sep. 14. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall for those who would like to donate. If you have any questions, please contact Joan Cameron at (908) 459-9068. The lunch is greatly appreciated by the Habitat volunteers so any assistance would be greatly welcomed.

Our next meeting will be Sunday, Sep. 15 following worship.

> Have a Blessed day, Judy Trigg



Sept. 15 after worship







Communion/Food Pantry/Coffee Hour

- ⇒ Sep. 8: Joan Cameron / Dave Conrad
- Oct. 6: Kelly McElroy / Jennifer McElroy
- \Rightarrow Oct. 20 (Anniversary Sunday):...
- ⇒ Nov. 3: Teri Harvey, Betsy Gervasi
- Dec. 1: Maggie Wilson/Teri Harvey
- ⇒ Jan. 5, 2025: Emily (Maier) Arena, open
- Feb. 2, 2025: Joan Cameron/ Dave Conrad

Food Pantry Sign-Ups

- Sep. 21: Joan Cameron, Dave Conrad
- Oct. 19: Dave Conrad
- Nov. 16: Teri Harvey (Giving Tree); Betsy Gervasi
- ⇒ Dec. 21: Teri Harvey (Giving Tree); Maggie Willson; Joan Cameron
- Jan. 18: Emily (Maier) Arena; Maggie Wilson
- Feb. 17: Emily (Maier) Arena; Joan Cameron

Committees of Deacons

- Sunshine: Joan Cameron
- Communion/Kitchen supplies: Joan Cameron

- ⇒ Christmas Giving Tree: Teri Harvey
- Shoebox Ministry: Kelly McElroy \Rightarrow
- ⇒ Food Pantry: Erika Wulster; Judy Trigg
- ⇒ Special Cases: Joan Cameron; Judy Trigg; Erika Wulster; David Harvey
- ⇒ Habitat for Humanity: Joan Cameron

Representatives to Session Committees

- Audit:
- Christian Education Joan Cameron
- Enduring Gifts: Erika Wulster
- Membership & Fellowship: Joan Cameron
- Mission: Judy Trigg \Rightarrow
- Music & Worship: Joan Cameron
- Nominating: Erika Wulster
- Presbyterian Women: Teri Harvey
- Property/ Grounds: Erika Wulster
- ⇒ Stewardship & Finance: Erika Wulster

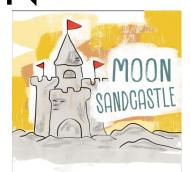
Presbyterian Women

Do you have a special occasion you would like to commemorate with altar flowers? Altar flowers can be cut or potted; from your garden, a store, or even delivered from a local florist! Please let the church office or the PW flowlady of the month (September: Robin Kasprenski) know if you'd like to provide flowers! There are signup sheets on the Communication Table in Fellowship Hall.

You may also sign up electronically through SignUpGenius which can be accessed through our website at https://fpcb-nj.org/altarflowers/. Thank you, in advance, by providing altar flowers!

The Presbyterian Women Executive Board will meet Tuesday, Sep. 10 following bible study—at approximately 12 noon.





You don't have to visit the beach to make a sandcastle. Make fluffy "moon sand" to build fun structures.

What you need:

- Large bowl
- Wooden spoon
- 8 cups flour
- 1 cup baby oil



What you do:

- Measure flour into the large bowl.
 Add baby oil.
- Mix thoroughly until all the oil is combined and the texture is consistent. If needed, use your hands to knead the mixture.
- 3. The sand is ready when it sticks together to form a ball when pressed in your hands.
- Use sand toys and molds to create a sandcastle. Store sand in an airtight container for up to two weeks.



Join us in Fellowship Hall for a delicious brunch and fellowship as we come together after worship and communion for a time of renewal after church on Sunday, Sep. 8. If you can, please consider bringing a quiche or breakfast casserole, baked items or fruit.



Christian Ed Ministry & Music & Worship Ministry

reetings from the Christian Education and Music and Worship Ministries!

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer with plenty of time to relax and enjoy some down time! My Family and I enjoyed a week in Disney World as well as some time in the Outer Banks. If you're like me, part of the reason you travel is to disconnect from work, chores, and the stress of everyday life for just a little while. In my own experience, I have found that becoming disconnected from church is also an unfortunate side effect of my families summer slow down. As time so often does, summer is passing by and winding down to and end. Fortunately, with every end comes a fresh beginning, and so we find ourselves looking ahead to Autumn and all that comes with it.

In our church community, Fall is the unofficial start of a new year. So, be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming events and as always, see you on Sunday!

- Sep. 8th: Rally Day! Lets rally the congregation for Communion and the return of the choir! Pot luck brunch to follow the service.
- Sep. 15th: First day of Sunday School! All youth are invited to be part of our excellent program, for question, please see me, Zach Burke, or Deb Albrecht.

- Oct. 20th: Anniversary Sunday, join us in celebrating the founding of our church!
- Dec. 1st: Hanging of the greens.
- Dec. 22nd: Children's Christmas Pageant.

Lastly, keep a lookout for an upcoming lectionary series by Pastor Dave on the topic of World Religions. Date and time to be announced.

Submitted in Stewardship, Zach Burke



Membership & Fellowship Ministry

Thanks to the many hands and especially to Deb Albrecht and Gail Weber, Membership and Fellowship, with the help of Presbyterian Women, hosted a delicious brunch for our graduates on Sunday, June 23^{rd} .



Levi Arena will head to North Warren Middle School, Abby Besser and Angelina Plut will be Freshman at East Stroudsburg University (Physical Education) and Cedar Crest College (Nursing) respectfully. We wish them God Speed and all the best!

Thank you to all who made this celebration so deliciously successful!

Pete Peterson, Chair



FALL FUN DAY at Camp Johnsonburg:

Now here's a fantastic opportunity for our church family! Enjoy a fall afternoon at Camp Johnsonburg on Oct. 6, from 1:00-6:30 PM. Weather dependent, all activities will be available, and dinner is included. Membership & Fellowship is pleased to be able to offer a \$10 stipend per person towards the cost of the afternoon. Pricing is tiered. The regular cost is \$25 or you can opt to pay a lower amount of \$15. *The choice is yours.* Registration and payment are done online by each attendee at https://www.campjburg.org/events/fall-fun-day/. With Membership & Fellowship's \$10 stipend, the final cost to each attendee will either be \$5 or \$10. What a day, what a deal! Please mark your calendar and plan on joining in on this opportunity for fun and fellowship! Pete Peterson will be in touch with you after Fall Fun Day for reimbursement or feel free to contact him before Oct. 6.

Did you, your friend, or family attend Friends Day at Camp Johnsonburg this summer on July 13? If so, please text, call or email Pete Peterson at 908.798.7164. He would like to know if anyone attended, get feedback, and see if any reimbursement is needed.

6) Nhen I was asked by Gail to do a Moment for Stewardship a few weeks ago, I responded with a well thought out "any time"! I assumed she wanted me to stand up here and extol the virtues of paying your per capita, little did I realize that what she was actually asking of me, was to answer a question that would require me to define my place in this church, and in Christianity as a whole. Just a little bit more heavy lifting than I had bargained for.

What she asked me, was to speak about why I come to church, and why we bring our children to church. I thought about this for a while, and I realized that to do this, perhaps I needed to answer these two questions.

- 1) Why do I come to church?
- 2) And why do I come to THIS church?

So here we go ... why do I come to church? My family began attending church here in 1993 when I was eight years old. At that time in my life, I came to church because I didn't have any say in the matter. There was no real deep contemplation on my part, church was just where we went on Sunday mornings. As I became older and more independent, I would argue about having to put on my church clothes and go to Sunday school, but inevitably my mother would win and there I would be, counting the minutes till I could peel off my Sunday best and join the other neighborhood kids for the rest of the afternoon. What I didn't realize until much later in life, was that all that time in Sunday school that I felt amounted to cruel and unusual punishment actually planted a seed somewhere inside me.

As a young man in college, my church attendance slid to

non existent, and continued that way into my early twenties. During that time though, I always felt God in my life. And I knew that there was always a home for me in the church, and that one day I would return. Though at that point in time I never suspected I would return to THIS church.

It wasn't until my wife Stephanie and I had our first child, that I could actually quantify why I needed to be part of a church. It was through my children that I realized Gods purpose for me is to pass on our faith to a new generation, to do my part to ensure the message of Jesus Christ continues in perpetuity through the ages. Countless religions have come and gone and been forgotten forever, but Christianity has endured for two thousand years through the efforts of all the stewards of faith who came before me. This, I feel, is my place in the grand scheme of things and that is why I come to church.

Now, why do I come to THIS church? As I mentioned, I have been attending this church since the age of eight. This church is as much a part of me as I am of it. I come to THIS church because of the love it has for my family, because of the fellowship we share, and because of the way it makes me feel when I leave here after a Sunday service. This church, this congregation, and our Pastor are a thread running through my life that I can follow all the way back to my childhood. I was confirmed in this church in 1998 by Pastor Dave, Stephanie and I were married in 2010 by Pastor Dave, all three of our children were baptized in this sanctuary by Pastor Dave, and soon my own son will be confirmed here by Pastor Dave.

It is the lifetime of memories that call me back to THIS church every Sunday. And not just my own memories, but the collective memories of this congregation and our shared history all the way back to its founding. The saints of THIS church live on through us all.

Even now, as I write this, so many memories from my life here at First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown come back to me.

I remember the way the water in Fellowship Hall used to smell of sulfur.

I remember playing tag in the sanctuary after church with the other children while our parents attended seemingly endless committee meetings downstairs.

I remember the week I spent in Indiana in July of 2001 at the Youth Triennium, and how it changed my life.

I remember my mothers blue dress with the red roses that she wore on so many Sundays.

And I remember the people, some who have moved on in life, and some who have moved on to life everlasting.

I remember Sunday school with Mrs. Nagy and Mrs. Kapitko. I remember Jim Pegg who shepherded me through confirmation. I remember Graham and Jim and Doyle and Bobbi and Rita. I remember standing in Helen Hall's living room while she used me as a mannequin when she made a new robe for the acolyte to wear on Christmas Eve. I remember going to school on Monday mornings in 3rd grade feeling like I knew something the other kids didn't, because every Sunday morning I sat four pews behind our teacher Mrs. Conrad.

These people, this community of faith we share here in this place, that is why I come to THIS church.



Moment for Stewardship by Zach Burke

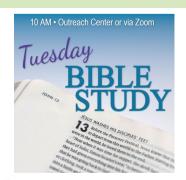


Join us Sunday mornings at 10 AM in person in the Sanctuary or online! All are welcome!



Other Bits of News





Baptism of Elizabeth "Lizzie" John.





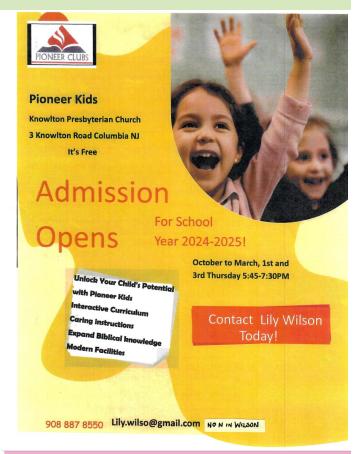


- THURSDAY, NOV. 7, 2024
- BROOK HOLLOW WINERY 594 STATE RT. 94, COLUMBIA, NJ
- DOORS OPEN 6:00 PM
 BIDDING ENDS 7:15 PM



WINE TASTING AVAILABLE | ADULTS ONLY | LIMITED SEATING

For additional information or to register, please visit: https://sites.google.com/view/blairwomansclubnj





No insurance needed!

As a dental hygiene student of NCC, I would like to invite you to schedule to have your teeth assessed and cleaned with me for free! Our cleanings consist of several processes, as listed below. Please note that these appointments may take multiple separate appointments - with the exception of children who require 1 appointment only. Each appointment is supervised by dental professionals along the way. Children, teens, adults, students, and seniors - <u>all</u> are welcome!



What's included:

- Extraoral Exam
- Dental Exam
- Intraoral Exam
- Bollishion
- Oral Capeas Secondina V----

When:

Mon. Wed. or Fri at 8 - 11:30 AM

Where:

owler Family Southside Center (3rd Floor)



Please contact me for more info or to sign up! 908-887-2903

margaret.wilson @student.northampton.edu

Our Daily Prayer List



The Human Family: Persons and individuals who struggle with food insecurity and homelessness, the people in the Ukraine and the Middle East; families and communities impacted by gun violence; those impacted by severe weather.

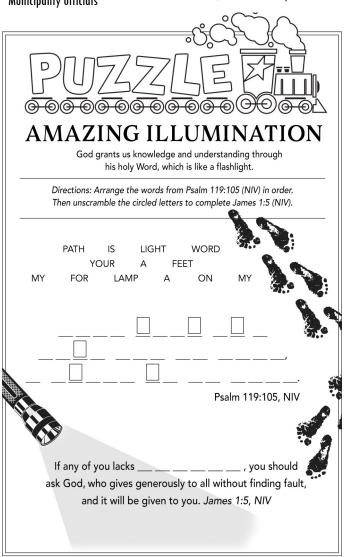
Men & Women Serving in the Armed Forces & America's Veterans

Those in elected office: The President, the Congress, State Assembly, Municipality officials

Healing for Friends & Families:

Cancer: Stas Czarnuciewicz, Judy Dales, Gordon Dugan, Samantha Elwell, Olivia Hollis, Adam Hubble, Tracy Lance, Troy Lutz, Caitlyn McMorrow and her family, Peter Porzio, Monica Salvadore, Andrew Shan, Robert Talmadge, Addie Wasserman, Molly Grace Young, Audrey, Eva, Gail, Liza, Joan

Illness & Injuries: Robert Benz, Sue Bonkowski, George Burke, Derek Cameron, Elaine Canonico, Kyle Canonico, Lucy Cuipa, Noah Haiduc-Dale, Ashley Farhat, Anna Nagyhetenyi, Jan Smith, Margaret Stephens, Gail Weber, Betty Ann Weir, Ed Williams, Ann, Carter, Demares, Evelyn, Michelle, Tracy, Valerie, Messina Family



Answer: Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path; wisdom



- 3 Donna Walters Rabas
- 4 Lydia Timcenko
- 8 Kimberly Gross (Nicholls)
- 13 Emily Maier (Arena) Frank McElroy
- 14 Jean Belcher
- 18 Waylon Kalafut
- 19 Ryan Burke
- 20 Jean O'Brien
- 21 Gail Weber
- 22 Carissa Plut
- 23 Marsha Terwilleger
- 26 Lisa Besser John Sliver

- 18 Barbara & Raymond Belcher
- 20 John & Charlotte Sliver
- 21 Chester & Elizabeth Topolski

July 2024									
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- 1 Emalee Besser
- 8 Caroline Yock
- 9 Sophia Rocca Timothy Topolski
- 10 Mark Nelke Aidan Quinn
- 15 Maggie Williard Joan Cameron
- 18 Kristin Yock
- 20 Colton Knol
- 21 Will McLain
- 24 Carol McLain
- 25 Ella Burke
- 26 Hailey Sazy
- 31 Peggy Williard



- 2 Craig & Kaye Evans
- 8 Edward & Pat Belcher
- 22 Brian & Andrea Walsh

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August 2024									
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BLAIRSTOWN, NEW JERSEY

Post Office Box 385, 1 Main Street Blairstown, NJ 07825 Church Office: 35 Main Street



Phone: (908) 362-5254 Fax: (908) 362-8060 Food Pantry: (908) 362-5254 Children's Center: (908) 362-7887

E-mail: fpcb@ptd.net Website: fpcb-nj.org Facebook.com/FPCBNJ







FPCB Calendar of Events (dates/times are subject to change)

- Sunday Worship: 10:00 AM in person in the Sanctuary or via Pastor David's personal Facebook.
- 4-H Club Meetings: Thursdays, Sep. 5, 12, 26 at 6:30 PM @ OC
- Christian Education / Music & Worship Meeting: Tuesday, Sep. 3 at 7:00 PM @OC/Zoom
- Rally Day/Brunch: Sunday, Sep. 8 following worship
- Bible study, Tuesdays at 10:00 AM in person @OC/Zoom (Meeting ID: 851 8394 1364 Passcode: 699382)
- Presbyterian Women Exec. Board: Tuesday, Sep. 10 at 12:00 PM @OC
- North Warren Garden Club: Tuesday, Sep. 10 at 6:00 PM @ OC
- Deacon Ministry Meeting: Sun., Sep. 15 following worship
- Library Book Group: Tuesday, Sep. 17 at 1:00 PM @ OC
- Stewardship & Finance: Wednesday, Sep. 18 at 10:00 AM @ OC
- Session: Thursday, Sep. 19 at 7:00 PM @OC/Zoom
- Food Pantry: Saturday, Sep. 21 at 9:30 AM
- Blair Woman's Club SilentAuction Meeting: Thursday, Sep. 26 at 2:00 PM @OC

